

TRREB: 83 Per Cent of Simcoe County Residents Say Municipalities Are Not Doing Enough to Make Housing Affordable

New Ipsos polling reveals severe affordability anxiety and rising pressure on local governments across the Simcoe Region

BARRIE, ON — January 29, 2026 Recent Ipsos polling conducted for the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB) finds that more than eight in ten Simcoe Region residents believe municipalities are not doing enough to make housing more affordable, signalling one of the highest frustration levels recorded anywhere in the GTA. The data shows that affordability concerns in Simcoe have intensified sharply in the past year, with residents expressing widening fear for the next generation and deep skepticism that current efforts are sufficient to address the region's crisis.

The polling also finds that 94 per cent of Simcoe residents agree governments must do everything possible to improve affordability. At the same time, two-thirds worry they or their children will be unable to remain in the region long-term due to housing costs.

"The message from residents is loud and unmistakable," said Daniel Steinfeld, TRREB President. "Simcoe families and individuals are telling us the affordability crisis has reached a breaking point, and they want faster, stronger action from local governments to increase supply and stabilize prices. These numbers should be a wake-up call for every municipality in the region."

Survey Findings

The Ipsos data shows a region under accelerating affordability strain, with extreme dissatisfaction directed at municipal governments:

- **83 per cent of Simcoe residents say municipalities are not doing enough to make housing affordable — among the highest levels in the GTA**
- **94 per cent of Simcoe residents agree governments need to do everything possible to improve affordability**
- **94 per cent of Simcoe respondents are worried about the next generation's ability to afford a home**

- **Only 3 in 10 believe governments are doing a good job addressing housing affordability**
- **A substantial majority believe the current housing mix does not reflect local needs**

“Residents are speaking directly and clearly about the urgency of the situation,” said John DiMichele, TRREB CEO. “Families and individuals expect local governments to lower costs and accelerate construction, not years from now, but immediately.”

Housing Starts in Simcoe County

CMHC data confirms that home construction in Simcoe County has slowed dramatically over the past three years.

Total annual starts fell to 28,556 units in 2023, a decline of nearly 22 per cent year over year. The slowdown accelerated further in 2024, when annual starts fell again to 18,308. The downward trend continued into 2025: through the first ten months of the year, Simcoe recorded only 8,220 starts, putting it on track to finish more than 55 per cent below 2024 levels. 2025 is likely to record the lowest annual total in more than a decade.

Simcoe’s Housing Policy Response

Municipal governments across Simcoe County, including Barrie and Town of Innisfil, have taken steps over the past two years to support new housing supply, such as advancing zoning reforms, faster approvals and supporting higher density along major transit corridors. Still, residents clearly do not believe these actions are sufficient to address the scale of the affordability crisis.

These efforts represent meaningful steps, but do not yet match the level of urgency reflected in the polling, nor do they appear sufficient to reverse the steep decline in new construction. The polling shows 83 per cent of Simcoe residents believe their municipal and regional governments are not doing enough to make housing more affordable.

Building More Housing Families and Individuals Can Afford in Simcoe

TRREB is calling on municipal and regional governments in Simcoe County, alongside the Province, to prioritize three key areas of reform to restore affordability and increase supply:

1. Lower Development Charges and Reduce Government-Driven Housing Costs

Residents strongly believe government costs are making housing less affordable. The Ipsos polling found that 83 per cent of Simcoe residents are frustrated by the lack of action taken to improve affordability, and a significant share say fees and charges are a major driver of high

home prices in the region. In Barrie, development charges and associated fees can add more than \$100,000 to the cost of a new single-family home, discouraging both new supply and homeownership.

2. Expand Missing-Middle Housing Options Across Simcoe

The polling reveals a widespread belief that Simcoe is building the wrong mix of homes. Simcoe residents overwhelmingly say the region is not creating enough attainable, family-sized, missing -middle housing options, such as townhomes, multiplex units, and mid-rise apartments. Ending exclusionary zoning, legalizing four-unit as-of-right development, and expanding permissions for gentle-density infill in established neighbourhoods would expand supply and align housing with local family needs.

3. Improve Approval Timelines and Speed Up Delivery of New Homes

Residents express deep concern about delays in the planning and approvals process, and the survey shows strong belief that municipal timelines are a significant barrier to affordability. A more transparent, faster, and more consistent approvals system will allow more projects to break ground, reverse the current downward trend in new construction, and expand supply more quickly.

About the Poll

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between Oct 17 – 30, 2025, on behalf of TRREB. For this survey, a sample of 2,000 GTA residents aged 18 years. The poll is accurate to within ± 2.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The [Simcoe Ipsos poll factum](#) is available here for review.

Media Inquiries:

For all media inquiries, please email media@trreb.ca.

About TRREB:

The [Toronto Regional Real Estate Board](#) is Canada's largest real estate board, with over 70,000 residential and commercial professionals connecting people, property, and communities.